

CABLE AND COMMUNICATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Meeting Minutes

Date: November 28th, 2007

Committee Attendance: Mark Berman, Jay Boyar, Kelly Cameron, Kernan Chaisson, Yen-Ju Chen, Trish Evans, Joy Ragsdale, Suzanne Weiss, Noreen Wells and Ben Wu.

Cable Office Staff: Jane Lawton, Andrea Gardner, and Keith Watkins. **Guest/s:** Brian Baker and Richard Turner.

<i>Topic</i>	<i>Discussion</i>	<i>Response/Action</i>
1. Introduction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting began at 7:00 p.m. with round table introductions. Suzanne announced the recording of the meeting for the purpose of minute taking. 	
2. Minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> October minutes reviewed with corrections noted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Motion to approve as amended.
3. Suzanne Weiss, Committee Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suzanne shared with the committee that council member Praisner had been hospitalized from an accident. She is in good spirits and moving towards a full recovery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suzanne offered find a suitable fruit basket to send on behalf of the committee. It was agreed that members would contribute towards its purchase.
4. Brian Baker (PEG Network)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The PEG Network and individual budget requests have been moved forward. The Cable office has asked that the PEG Network work on a contingency plan and work to protect the existing equipment. We also have changed our requests so that they tie in with the seven of the County's strategic objectives. Listed below are some important initiatives: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Equipment (continue with digital migration) Resources to put into mobile production vehicle (maintain and replace) Closed captioning (continue with our growth in this area especially since we have over 50,000 hearing impaired) As work continues on the budget, we continuously focus on the area of cost saving. Promotional materials which were previously done with help of an outside agency are now being prepared by us. Another aspect of our cost saving initiative is the work recently completed on our annual report which is due out in January. Montgomery College, a smaller partner of the PEG Network, has a strategic plan dating back to 2002 which is driving our operating budget. We are trying to get up to speed with our PEG partners by moving our programming towards web casting and in a video on demand format which has resulted in our request for an IP Video Instructional Technologist. Trish asked can you give a comparison of your full time staff for MCPS verses MCT? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MCT has approximately 25 FTE and 10 part time staff. Brian has 13 full-time staff, 1 temporary, plus the manager. He added that MCPS has 20 to 25 staffers and his office has approximately 12 employees including himself.

<p>Brian Baker (PEG Network) continued</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark asked whether this was a full time position and is this going to be primarily for outreach for the college and could this position be funded by the college? • Susan asked if all positions were filled? • Trish asked Brian if he could you speak to the request of the other PEG entities in terms of their requests for FTE's and other positions? • Susanne said that one of the items the PEG Network will need to factor into their budget is a payment back to the county of 17,500 dollars in a replacement fund towards the mobile production vehicle. Kernan asked if that money is ear marked or protected in any way? • Trish asked about what happens with the 15 million dollars in revenue that comes into the Cable Office? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brian responded yes this request is for a full time position but the college could not fund this position because this position will be supporting 100% of the television activities especially with keeping up with the growth of live web streaming programs. • Brian responded that they are down 4 positions. • Brian responded he has not had an opportunity to speak with the other PEG partners about their budget requests. • Brian was unsure of what the current practice is but he was asked to include it in this year's budget request. Jane interjected she recently met with the Chief Information Officer who explained that in past years the Cable Office was excluded from building into their budget info structure replacement. He now has given her the okay to start reflecting a certain amount every year into budget for replacement and upgrading of equipment. A meeting has been scheduled the PEGs for next week to get us on board with the same format other departments in the county have for replacement info structure. • Jane responded all this money is spent on cable and technology items which must be approved by the County Council and the County Executive.
<p>5. Richard Turner, MCT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We are in the fist year of experience with the mobile production van and there are things which we hadn't quite anticipated especially since each of the PEGs use the van in a different capacity. • Richard provided the committee with an overview of the FY09 budget requests which has been submitted to the Cable Office. He also provided further clarification to questions relating to the budget. • Trish asked if there a mandate with the mobile production vehicle to encourage volunteers or is there a rule that no volunteers can work on the mobile production vehicle and is it your goal to encourage volunteer use of the mobile production vehicle? • Joy asked what was the launch date for the truck and if there had been a request to cover events such as the Jazz fest. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See attached packet. • Richard responded this is an excellent idea to encourage and have our volunteers expand on the use of the truck. The vehicle was designed to accommodate this type of use and training is part of the process that volunteers will go through. • The truck was launched in June 2007 and would serve as the perfect platform for this type of event. The Takoma Park parade was covered by the truck but I am not aware of any request to cover the Jazz fest.

<p>Richard Turner, MCT continued</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noreene asked when an event such as Takoma Park is covered by the mobile production van, does the event sponsor pay for the staffing cost associated with operating the van? • Jane asked how many projects are going on at the Gilchrist Center currently? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Richard responded yes Takoma Park does pay for the individuals who staff the truck for their event. The truck engineering support is paid by the PEG Network. The Cable Office has requested a full time engineer for the truck in the PEG Network budget. • We have some classes starting up but are experiencing some issues with space and also with use of the computer lab which will limit the amount of projects we will be working on. Currently looking to do a summer youth program. We have also purchased equipment specifically designated for the Gilchrist Center including smaller handy cam and high definition cameras. Fiber was recently installed and so we are looking into utilizing it.
<p>6. Jane Lawton, Cable Administrator</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jane informed the committee of rate increases to the basic packages from the three providers: Comcast (\$2.30) \$60.35, RCN (\$2.99) 56.94 and Verizon (\$5.00) 47.99. • Some charge additional for converter boxes. Comcast dropping cost of converter box to \$3.99, Verizon is up \$5.00 and RCN is up \$4.00. • Trunk trip fees rose for Comcast to \$19.95, RCN is \$49.95 for pick up of equipment, with mailer they send to customer \$22.00, Verizon's fee is \$79.95 and this amount will also be charged for any repair. • Assuming Cavalier's franchise agreement is approved, we are soon to become the only county in the United States to have four franchises. • Cavalier franchise application process is moving along. The public hearing was held on Wednesday, November 14th. • At our last meeting, you had questions regarding Cavalier's customer service and there were two places where they have service to date. The first in the City of Richmond since June of 2006, in the Hampton Roads and Tidewater area they have had services since March of 2007. They have had some problems with billing and customers who are dissatisfied with the service. Once the service is terminated, customers can drop off the equipment at their offices or there is a \$15.00 pick fee by a courier. In Hampton Roads a marketing blitz was done to get new customers. They have not yet filed their customer service reports because they have not met the threshold for filing quarterly reports has not been reached. Also, in both places Virginia has a law where services can be offered before their agreement has been finalized. These are new markets so they are not fully established. 	

<p>Jane Lawton, Cable Administrator continued</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark asked what is the status of the Cable Office's outside financial folks looking at Cavalier's numbers because that had not been completed as of two weeks ago? • Joy asked if we have ever challenged the leasing rates since they are built into the cost? • Suzanne asked are we running close to the time clock Jane mentioned at the last meeting? • Mark asked if it were possible to have the representative of Cavalier come in to meet with the committee prior to the council's review? • The budget is still being worked on. • Joy asked Jane if there was a decision made on the proposal of FCC possible regulation of cable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jane responded to her knowledge this had already been completed. This process is completed before the application is sent before council. Jane will follow up with Amy Wilson. • Jane responded since Cavalier is the first company we have in the county she was unsure of the answer. She will however look into this and get back to the committee. • Jane responded that since Mrs. Praisner's accident she was unsure as to how this would affect the time table for Cavalier. • Jane promised to have the representative at the December meeting. A possible interim meeting with the subcommittee and a Cavalier representative was discussed a tentative date of Tuesday, December 4th @ 7:30 p.m. was suggested. • Jane responded that there were two proceedings which were addressed by the FCC; the first is changing local franchising with regard to new entrants which is on appeal and the second is with regard to incumbents was just published. Jane stated that she is scheduled to speak tomorrow at the Department of Justice who is offering comments to the FCC and also lobbying state legislators about statewide franchising.
<p>5. Suzanne Weiss, Committee Chair</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suzanne informed the committee on the status of the Consumer Brochure which is the final edits stage with the County Executive's Office. • Suzanne spoke on the goal of the committee to continue with ongoing efforts to keep residents informed. She also asked about the status of the brochures produced by CTC and informed the committee that we are down to the final edits on the consumer brochure, still awaiting a response for the County Executive's office. • Suzanne inquired on the approval of the new board member by the County Council. • Noreen alerted the committee on the awards ceremony for Montgomery Community Television taking place on Saturday, December 1st. This year's theme is Mardi gras and invitations were mailed to the committee. • Joy asked about the status of the posting of the meeting minutes on the web site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jane will follow up with Donna Keating. • Keith responded to date he had not heard anything from the County Executive's office. • Jane responded she would follow up with Tiffany Qu.

<p>Suzanne Weiss, Committee Chair continued</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trish asked Suzanne to speak to the topic of outreach programs, since Neil Greenberger's discussion on creating more public service announcements; she would like to further this discussion at January's meeting. Joy inquired about the possibility of placing a consumer friendly link on the web site. Suzanne responded that the committee agrees this is one of their main functions. The committee will consist of Trish, Joy, Jay and Kernan. • Suzanne request a tentative meeting schedule for next year's meeting listing the 4th Wednesday of every month. • Suzanne reminded the committee of elections next month for the position of Chair and Vice Chair. The rule is no more than two consecutive terms in a position. • A portion of next month's meeting will be a dinner and Jane suggested that we each take the time out to talk a little bit with each other. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jane shared with the committee the recent taping of Montgomery County Comments which included Marjorie Williams and Keith Watkins. This show which airs on December 9th will provide viewer information on the functions of the Cable Office. Jane also met with Jessica Fusillo, who works out of the County Executive Public Information Office and is also interested in creating more programs very similar to the one produced by Donna Keating. Jane promised to get back to the committee on the progress. Suzanne suggested a committee should be created in January. Trish has offered her expertise. Yen-Ju Chen state that consideration should be given to the non English speaking individuals in addition to those individuals who do not have computer access. Suzanne brought the motion to form a committee to further the discussion on outreach of programs which was second by Joy. • Keith will provide this. • Discussion ensued about the process and what information was necessary to send to the Cable Office. • An invitation would be extended to Marjorie Williams
<p>6. Adjournment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting adjourned at 9:10 p.m. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next committee meeting scheduled for Wednesday, January 23rd at 7:00 p.m. in Room 114.

Submitted by: Andrea Gardner, Office Services Coordinator